

Social Security Program

The Social Security program—Old-Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance (OASDI)—provides monthly benefits to workers and their families when earnings stop or are reduced because the worker retires, dies, or becomes disabled. The amount of the worker's retirement insurance (old-age) or disability benefit is based on the worker's level of earnings in employment or self-employment covered by the Social Security program. The benefit amount for an auxiliary or survivor beneficiary is based on a percentage of the worker's benefit. Monthly benefits are payable to retired workers at age 65 (reduced benefits at 62) or to disabled workers at any age. Auxiliary and survivor beneficiaries must generally meet an age, a disability, or child care requirement.

Nationally, in December 1995, benefits were paid to 43,387,000 persons. This number included 26,673,000 retired workers, 5,504,000 widows and widowers, 4,185,000 disabled workers, 3,290,000 wives and husbands, and 3,734,000 children. Social Security beneficiaries represented 16.1 percent of the total population of the United States.

Monthly benefits averaged \$720 for retired workers, \$680 for nondisabled widows and widowers, \$682 for disabled workers, and \$354 for wives and husbands of retired and disabled workers. Average payments for children of deceased workers were \$469; for children of retired workers, \$322; and for children of disabled workers, \$183.

Monthly payments in December 1995 totaled \$28.1 billion. Of this amount, \$20.5 billion was paid to retired workers and their dependents, \$4.5 billion to survivors, and \$3.2 billion to disabled workers and their dependents. Average benefits and total monthly payments include the 2.6 percent cost-of-living increase effective December 1995.

In California, benefits were paid to 3,983,540 persons. This number included 2,515,400 retired workers; 450,480 widows and widowers; 371,450 disabled workers; 322,960 wives and husbands, and 323,250 children. Social Security beneficiaries represented 12.6 percent of the total population of the State.

Retired workers in California received an average of \$733 per month; widows and widowers, \$690; disabled workers, \$691; and wives and husbands of retired and disabled workers, \$364. Average payments for children were: \$470 for children of deceased workers, \$314 for children of retired workers, and \$191 for children of disabled workers.

Monthly payments in December 1995 totaled \$2,643 million. Of this amount, \$1,972 million was paid to retired workers and their dependents, \$391 million to survivors, and \$280 million to disabled workers and their dependents.

Supplemental Security Income Program

Supplemental Security Income (SSI) is a Federal cash assistance program that provides monthly payments to low-income aged, blind, and disabled persons in the 50 States, the District of Columbia, and the Northern Mariana Islands. The program is based on nationally uniform eligibility standards and payment levels. The Federal SSI payment is determined by the recipient's countable income, living arrangement, and marital status. As of January 1996, the maximum monthly Federal SSI payment for an individual in his or her own household and with no other countable income is \$470, and for a couple, \$705.

A State may supplement the payment levels of all or selected categories of recipients. These supplemental payments may be administered by the State or the Social Security Administration.

In December 1995, 6,514,314 persons received federally administered SSI payments including 1,446,122 aged and 5,068,012 who were disabled or blind. A total of 2,114,830 recipients were aged 65 or older, 3,482,256 were 18 to 64, and 917,048 were under 18.

The total number of persons receiving either a Social Security payment, a federally administered SSI payment, or both was 47,434,378.

Federally administered payments totaled nearly \$2.3 billion in December 1995: \$2.1 billion in Federal SSI payments, and \$265 million in State supplements. The average federally administered payment was \$358. The aged averaged \$251; disabled and blind, \$389.

In addition, 299,603 persons in 24 States received State-administered payments in December 1995, which totaled \$43 million.

In **California**, 1,031,872 persons—332,090 aged, and 699,782 disabled and blind—received federally administered SSI payments in December 1995. A total of 454,663 recipients were aged 65 or older, 504,841 between 18 and 64, and 72,368 under 18.

Federally administered SSI payments totaled \$460.1 million, of which \$292.4 million was Federal SSI and \$167.8 million, State supple-

mentation. The average federally administered payment was \$446 overall, \$376 for aged recipients, and \$479 for those disabled and blind.

In December 1995, the total number of persons in California receiving either a Social Security benefit, a federally administered SSI payment, or both was 4,610,600.

Earnings and Employment

Nationally, in 1993, the latest year for which State data are available, about 136 million persons worked in employment that was covered by the Social Security (OASDI) program. They had covered earnings of \$2.6 trillion and more than \$411 billion was paid in Social Security and Medicare taxes. Of this amount, \$328 billion was allocated to the OASDI Trust Funds and the remainder was deposited in the Medicare, Hospital Insurance (HI) Trust Fund.

In **California**, in 1993, about 14.8 million residents worked in Social Security covered employment. They had covered earnings of \$299 billion and about \$46.7 billion was paid in Social Security and Medicare taxes. Of this amount, \$37.1 billion was allocated to the OASDI Trust Funds and the remainder was deposited in the HI Trust Fund.

For additional information pertaining to the data in this factsheet, please contact: Rona Blumenthal for Social Security data (410-965-0163); Shirley Queen for SSI program data (410-965-1085); and for information about earnings and employment, Greg Diez (410-965-0153).
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Social Security Administration
Office of Research, Evaluation and Statistics
November 1996